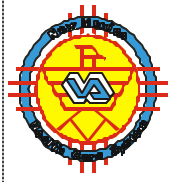


# The Piñon Press



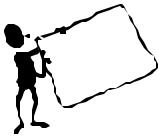
## Monthly News for Staff and Volunteers of the New Mexico VA Health Care System



**Albuquerque, N.M.**

**October 2004**

### First Annual Quality Fair and All-Employee Picnic



I am pleased to announce that PI Leadership received 53 poster applications for the First Annual Quality Fair. Entries spanned clinical and administrative services and even extended to the Vet Center in Gallup, N.M. We were

cautioned by other facilities that have sponsored Quality Fairs to not get our hopes up in terms of participation and expect no more than ten posters the first year. Well, they clearly didn't know the spirit of NMVAHCS employees when making that statement—WHAT A TEAM!

Posters will be on display in the Education Building from 7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Friday, October 1. Drop by and vote for your favorite poster. Staff attending the Quality Fair will receive one hour of education credit. The greatest number of votes will determine the winner of the People's Choice Award. PI Leadership votes will determine the first and second place winners of the PI Leadership Award.

People's Choice Award	\$750
PI Leadership Award-Second Place	\$1250
PI Leadership Award-First Place	\$2000

Find out who the winners are on Friday, October 15, at 11:30 a.m. in the Education Auditorium. Join the Executive Team, PI Leadership, and me as we recognize participants and present the awards. An All-Employee Picnic featuring great chefs from around the medical center will follow at the picnic area next to the AFGC trailer, 11 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Who will the winners be? What other surprises are in store? I hope you come to find out. Please mark your calendar for these special dates and celebrate the many accomplishments of NMVAHCS staff at our First Annual Quality Fair.

Mary A. Dowling  
Director

### Toy Box Needs Donations

The toy box located in the Eligibility and Benefits Section, Room 1D-103, Building #41, needs donations of clean, new or used stuffed animals or other toys for the children of veterans. If you can help, call extension 4522 or 2741.



### Contribute to the 2004 Combined Federal Campaign

The 2004 Combined Federal Campaign officially began on Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2004, with a kick off event conducted at the Albuquerque VA Medical Center campus that featured 48 participating agencies.



Our CFC organizational goal is \$103,000, and your contribution will help us reach that figure.

Staff contributed approximately \$101,709.64 during the 2003 CFC, and your generosity benefited many individuals including veterans.

Appointed key workers in each Service have distributed campaign materials. The 2004 CFC runs through Friday, Nov. 5.

Call extension 2269 for more details.

### Fun Walk and Fitness Run Occurs Oct. 20



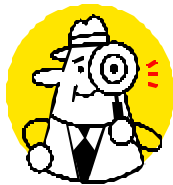
The New Mexico VA Health Care System's Physical Therapy Section is sponsoring the annual one-mile fun walk and two-mile fitness run for staff members on Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2004, noon, by the fitness cluster on the medical center parade ground near Building #1.

In October, the Physical Therapy Section observes National Physical Therapy Month, and this year's theme is "Physical Therapy: Get Fit for Life."

Runners and walkers are eligible to win raffle prizes including a pedometer, lunch cooler, cap, travel tumbler, water bottle and a t-shirt. Trophies will be awarded for first, second, and third place for male and female participants. Registration forms may be picked up in the Physical Therapy Clinic, Room 2A-106, Building #41. Registration deadline is Oct. 18. Packet pick up for the walk and run will also occur that same day in the Physical Therapy Clinic. For more information, contact extension 4029.

## Mammography Program Passes Second Inspection

On August 17, 2004, a Food and Drug Administration inspector conducted an assessment of the New Mexico VA Health Care System's mammography program.



The inspection revealed that our program has fully complied with national mammography standards and has met the annual Mammography Quality Standards Veterans Affairs inspection requirement.

This is the second consecutive annual FDA inspection resulting in the organization's full compliance with mammography standards.



### NMVAHCS Performs First Two Neutrospec Procedures in New Mexico

The New Mexico VA Health Care System performed the initial two Neutrospec procedures ever done in New Mexico. This test uses Nuclear Medicine's workhorse isotope, Technetium-99m, which is labeled to an antibody attached to neutrophils. Neutrophils are the white blood cells that fight acute infection. The Food and Drug Administration released this new radiopharmaceutical in July 2004, but because of delays in its initial commercial production, it was not available until last month.

Nuclear medicine clinics across the country have been using labeled neutrophils to locate sites of infection for more than two decades. The labeling, however, was performed **outside** of the body in a complex laboratory procedure, which required two to four hours of bench work. The labeled cells were then returned to the patient as a small transfusion of his/her own-labeled neutrophils. Imaging was delayed hours to days after that to allow these labeled cells time to move through the body to find the infected site.

The beauty of the Neutrospec examination is that the labeled antibodies can be prepared in minutes. Then, they are injected into the bloodstream where a few more minutes suffice for them to find the neutrophils, which have already accumulated at the site of infection. The labeling of the neutrophils occurs rapidly **inside** the body. This means the whole test can be done from start to finish in less than an hour. Neutrospec is expected to remarkably streamline the important nuclear medicine search for infection. It is another first for our hospital.

*Thanks to Dr. Michael F. Hartshorne for the information above.*

## Employee Wellness Corner

This month's VA Wellness Program Lunch and Learn seminar features New Mexico VA Health Care System Clinical Dietician Annette Leger discussing "Jazzing Up Food," Wednesday, Oct. 6, 12:15 – 12:45 p.m., Education Building #39 Auditorium.

Listed below are a couple of community wellness events also occurring in October:



Mothers Against Drunk Driving's 2004 Strides or Change, a 5K (3.1 miles) non-competitive walk, occurs Saturday, Oct. 16, 9 a.m., Albuquerque Academy. Opening ceremonies take place at 8:40 a.m. Register yourself or your team by logging on to [www.stridesforchange.com](http://www.stridesforchange.com) or contacting Ian Wilson, MADD NM, at (505) 255-2955 or via e-mail at [ian.wilson@madd.org](mailto:ian.wilson@madd.org)

On Saturday, Oct. 30, the Albuquerque Asthma Walk, another 5K-distance event, transpires at the Hoffmantown Baptist Church parking lot, 8888 Harper Rd. NE. In addition to the walk, there will be a kid's corner, food, team photos, music and many more activities. Call Meaghan Bruce, (505) 265-0732, for more information.

Steve Farley, R.N., assigned to Ward 4D evening shift and Kathy Schancer, RD, Dietician for SCI, are marathon runners and just finished the Pikes Peak Marathon in August 2004. What a challenge! The route starts at the base of Pikes Peak and goes to the top at an elevation of 14,000+ feet. Congratulations for this feat, Steve and Kathy!

To All Employees:

The Employee Wellness Committee would like to recognize "wellness" achievements of employees. Did you run, bicycle, swim or walk in a race or for a charity event? Have you achieved a milestone related to wellness? Do you know of an accomplishment regarding wellness of one of your co-workers who may be too modest to boast? If so, we would like to recognize yours or their efforts.

Please e-mail Maria Andrews with the details.

### October 2004 Generator-Testing Schedule

Monday, Oct. 4	8 a.m.	Building #10
Monday, Oct. 4	12:45 p.m.	Building #1
Tuesday, Oct. 5	12:45 p.m.	Buildings #3 and #47
Saturday, Oct. 9	7:15 a.m.	Buildings #41, #45, and #49

Call Engineering Service, extension 2213, for details.

# Tracer Methodology Training

The Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organization's Tracer Methodology training conducted by Luana Haskell occurs Monday, Oct. 4, 2004, noon – 4 p.m., Education Building #39 Auditorium.

This is a repeat of the Tracer training held in June 2004. Registration is not required, and education credit will be awarded.

Call Cordy Garcia, extension 5614, for more details.



## For Your Health

### Myths about influenza vaccine for healthcare workers: the top ten list

*Editor's Note: The bottom five are listed below. The top five will be published in the next issue. Do not forget to get your flu shot. Call extension 4945 for more information.*

I am not in a high-risk group.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly recommend influenza vaccine for caregivers and family members of patients at highest risk of complications for influenza. Remember: high-risk refers to those at high risk for *complications of influenza*. We are *all* at risk of contracting influenza disease and passing it on to others.

If my patients get the flu shot, then I do not have to.

While influenza vaccination has significant effects on mortality and hospitalization in high-risk groups, these groups may not be fully protected against disease. Children under six months, the highest-risk pediatric group, cannot be vaccinated because they do not respond to vaccine. Although 183 million people in the United States now fall into high-risk groups, only 100 million doses of vaccine are manufactured. **There are many unprotected high-risk patients in our population. Vaccination of healthcare workers remains important for patient safety.**

I do not need the flu shot. If I do get the flu, I will just take the new flu medication.

This approach does not protect the patients you take care of. Infected healthcare workers can spread influenza for several days before developing symptoms, or shed virus while having minimal or no clinical illness. In addition, the effects of antiviral drugs on influenza illness are limited, shortening the duration of illness by an average of one day. Many healthcare workers also feel compelled to work while sick or return to work early while they are still contagious. **Primary prevention by vaccination is the best means of preventing influenza illness and spread.**

The flu shot causes Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

**The Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS) was associated with swine flu vaccinations in 1976, but has not been clearly linked to vaccine for any other influenza strains.** The CDC states "if there is a risk of GBS from current influenza vaccines, it is estimated at one or two cases per million people vaccinated". The rate of GBS in the population is 10-20 cases per million per year. Many infections, especially Campylobacter-related gastroenteritis, are associated with GBS.

I got a flu shot last year.

Circulating influenza strains change every year and the effect of the vaccine wanes. Therefore, **yearly vaccination with a vaccine against current strains is required for effectiveness.**

## Employees Graduating from School Programs, November 2003 – September 2004

### University of Phoenix, MSN Program:

- Raneta Bonin, ED, Completion – August 11, 2004
- Lois Coomer, Primary Care, Clinic Operations Service, Completion – Sept. 15, 2004
- Cynthia McCorvey, Primary Care, Clinic Operations Service, Completion – August 11, 2004
- Nancy Prime, HBPC, Completion – August 11, 2004
- Carol Shadron, Off-Tour Nursing Supervisor, Completion – August 11, 2004
- Nada Lauts, GI Studies, Completion – August 11, 2004



### University of Phoenix, MBA/HCA Program:

- Darlene Brandeberry, Cardiac Cath, Completion – July 8, 2004
- Karon Wagoner, Research Service, Completion – January 5, 2004

### University of Phoenix, BSN Completion Program:

- Lorraine Anslover, Float Pool, Completion – August 11, 2004
- Lisa Gomez, Infusion Clinic, Clinic Operations Service, Completion – April 30, 2004
- Lyndia Gruntorad, SICU, Completion – July 15, 2004
- Jesse Huffman, Primary Care, Clinic Operations Service, Completion – July 15, 2004
- Grace Jojola, Infusion Clinic, Clinic Operations Service, Completion – November 2003
- Luis Lopez, Ward 5A, Completion – July 15, 2004
- Deann McCants, Ward 5D-Tele, Completion – July 15, 2004
- James McCarthy, ED, Completion – May 3, 2004
- Bernice Moyers, SICU, Completion – June 10, 2004
- Tamara Staley, CCU/SDU, Completion – July 15, 2004

### University of New Mexico, BSN Completion Program:

- Rosemary Keesecker, ED, Completion – May 15, 2004

### New Mexico Highlands University, Master of Social Work Program:

- Joseph Madrid, Nursing Office, Completion – May 8, 2004

### VISN 18 Executive Career Field Leadership Development Program:

- Edie Salas-Escobar, Nursing Office, Completion – August 27, 2004
- Melvin DeHerrera, Clinic Director, Clinic Operations Service, Completion – August 27, 2004

## Wanted: Native American Special Emphasis Program Manager

The NMVAHCS Equality and Diversity Program Advisory Committee (EDPAC) is seeking an employee interested in serving as Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) for the Native American Employment Program.

This is a collateral duty appointment and requires training, as well as attendance at the monthly EDPAC meetings. An application is required, and both your Supervisor and Service Chief must approve your participation. For more information and application, call Don Rincon, EEO Manager, extension 5403.

## Voluntary Leave Transfer Program Recipients



Attention All Employees: If you have annual leave that you wish to donate to an individual who has encountered a medical emergency, there are eligible recipients approved under the VLTP who would benefit from a leave donation. For further information, contact the human resources specialist for you Service at extension 2381.

The following Voluntary Leave Transfer Program recipients have requested to be published in *The Piñon Press*: **Mary M. Stark** and **Karen Cote-Dickson**

If you want to have your status as a leave recipient published in *The Piñon Press*, you should submit your request to the Chief, Human Resources Management Service (05).

## Health and Medical Emergency Preparedness Seminar Coming Oct. 21

New Mexico VA Health Care System Industrial Hygienist Michael Adams teaches "Answering the Call: Health and Medical Emergency Preparedness and Response in New Mexico," Thursday, Oct. 21, 2004, 8 a.m. – noon, Classrooms 1 and 2, Education Building #39.

Four continuing education credits will be awarded to participants.

Contact extension 5276 for more information.

## Celebrate Respiratory Care Week, Oct. 24-30



Join our organization in recognizing and honoring the contributions of respiratory therapists to lung health during Respiratory Care Week, Oct. 24-30, 2004. This year's theme is "Lung Health for Life."

What do respiratory therapists do? They keep people breathing.

Respiratory therapists serve in cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation programs, as well as exercise testing for athlete training.

The weeklong celebration, sponsored by the American Association for Respiratory Care, has occurred for more than 20 years. Lung Health Day will be observed on the Wednesday (Oct. 27) of Respiratory Care Week in order to bring lung health issues to the public's attention.

For more details, call extension 5232.

## Patient Education Update

October is Breast Health Awareness Month. Visit the Fountain of Healthy Living Learning Center, Room 1A-102, Building #41, or the kiosks for more information.

Celebrate Health Education Week, Nov. 1–5, 2004. This week is promoting the importance of health education. This is a combination of both employee and patient health education. Come join the three celebrations listed below:

- ❖ Tuesday, Nov. 2: Library Education Services, Medical Center Library, 4C, Building #41. Browse the new materials and check out the patient education section. Free bookmarks will also be available.
- ❖ Wednesday, Nov. 3: Employee Wellness Lunch and Learn Seminar, "Taking Time for Mental Health," presented by Michael Sergent, Education Service, 12:15 – 12:45 p.m., Education Building #39 Auditorium.
- ❖ Thursday, Nov. 4: Patient Health Education, 10 a.m. – noon; Fountain of Healthy Living Learning Center Room, 1A-102, Building #41. Visit the center for blood pressure and weight checks, as well as grab a snack and enter the prize drawing.



The next diabetes update occurs Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2004, 1 – 2:30 p.m., Education Building #39 Auditorium. Session topic will be "When Should I Monitor and What Do the Numbers Mean," presented by the New Mexico VA Health Care System's certified diabetic educators. Seminar is free and open to staff, volunteers, patients and the community.

For more details, call extension 4656.

## Police Service Participates in Parade



New Mexico VA Health Care System Police Service Officers (pictured left to right) Silas Zimmerman, Daniel Harper, Richard Larson, Patrick Mathis and Jeremy Brown (hidden by flag) served as an honor guard during the 2004 New Mexico State Fair Parade, which occurred in Albuquerque on Saturday, Sept. 4.